

Consider

We're picking up from last week. Let's get straight into it.

Here's a sample of two sets of questions one may face in their life:

1. What's my 5, 10, 15-year plan? When could I pay off my house? When is a good time to buy? Do I want an HOA or not? How much will I be able to contribute to my children's college? Should I go to college? How much will we be able to leave our children? Will my daughter make it in her desired career? Will I make a partner? Will I get the promotion? How much vacation time can I get with this job? Do others appreciate my accomplishments at work? Do people see my talents? Are my children well-liked? How long will I live? How good will my health be in 5 years? What can I get that brings happiness or entertainment into my life? Will my son marry a girl he likes? Will my daughter marry a boy who loves her? Who's going to take office next election? What rights may be taken away? What opportunities will be available in the future for my grandchildren? These are realistic questions. In fact, Jordan and I are refocusing on our budgeting right now. This if life.

2. How is my heart? How is my son's heart? How is my daughter's heart? How is my spouse's heart? How do I help my neighbor? How does my neighbor view me? How does my family view me? Am I ready to die? Have I changed over the last year? Who will I be today since tomorrow isn't promised? How much do I lean on God? How much do I think about God? How much do I pray to God? How much do I take advantage of His word? How useful am I in the body? Is my understanding of God maturing? What does God think of me?

Are you represented by one category over another? Or do they both represent you? We can think deeply, but we need to focus in a balanced way. Are you genuinely balanced? Being overly focused in either category is problematic. You could be so focused on the spiritual that you neglect responsibility and fail to acknowledge how this world works. You can also forget what this world is about and neglect the big picture.

God's not asking us to stop everything we're doing, sit in a chair, and think about things all day. But we need to find time to do it. We need to be people who see biblical truths throughout the day in our every day routine. The Bible has a word for it: meditation. Another one is: consider.

The word is scattered throughout the Bible. You'll see a bit of it used in Moses' last address, Judges, Samuel, and the lives of the Kings. You'll find it in Job, Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes (shocker). It's in the major and minor prophets. In these passages, you'll see men begging God to consider them in their affliction. And that's right on. God's been considering His people from the beginning. He remembers. He didn't forget His people in Egypt when they cried out for help. He heard them and remembered. And this is the God of the Bible.

Here are a few examples:

2 Chronicles 19:4–7 Jehoshaphat lived at Jerusalem. And he went out again among the people, from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim, and brought them back to the Lord, the God of their fathers. He appointed judges in the land in all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, "Consider what you do, for you judge not for man but for the Lord. He is with you in giving judgment. Now then, let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Be careful what you do, for there is no injustice with the Lord our God, or partiality or taking bribes."

Ecclesiastes 7:14 In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other, so that man may not find out anything that will be after him.

Isaiah 44:9-20. Yet, you continue to read about God's mercy in the following portion. If this could happen to them, what could happen to me? If God could be patient and forgiving of something so foolish, could He act the same for me? What does this all mean?

Brethren, there are so many Christians (young included) who are thinking deeply about things. Some didn't have help growing up, and they're going through the process of asking the big questions. We still have philosophers today, do we not? This doesn't mean they're being godly or accepting what they find. But brethren, we do need to be people who think deeply. We need to stop and look around. We need to pause. We need to sit in awkward silence. We need to face a silence that can frighten us. We need to confront obstacles and deep questions.

God calls for us to consider our steps, which is more than reasonable. He wants our children to consider our teaching (which is His). He wants us adults to consider His teaching. He wants us to remember the good He's done. The protection He's given. He wants us to remember the folly of ignoring Him. He wants us to remember His punishment as well (when appropriate).

This isn't about supplying the "list" passages. This isn't about identifying the areas to mature or grow in, because it doesn't do any good if we're not taking the time to consider in the first place. In other words - if you don't want to consider, giving you a list of areas doesn't do any good. There put on the shelf for another day.

I'm literally asking, "do we think deeply like those of old?"

So tuned in are those of the past that they encourage us to look at the way of an ant to consider our lives (for example - consider the ant o sluggard, etc.)

When was the last time you looked at God's creation as a mentor in your life? Or do we only look at the ant to motivate us to keep from being broke? It's not about having money. It's about being responsible and helping others. It's not about building big barns. It's not (and

this can get scary) about how much you can save for your kids. What if they waste it within 5 years? What if something out of their control takes it all? We would have to rely on God. But what if they have no God to rely on? That is . . . that He's not someone they would genuinely turn to in faith?

We've got to look in the mirror. I'll bring this up next week (because the mirror James speaks of is actually the word of God). But let's be reminded that we struggle to look in the mirror. I only spend a short time looking in the mirror daily. Most of it is spent looking at others. That can be a good or bad thing, depending on your mindset. Looking at others may make you feel better about yourself or remind you to watch your steps carefully because we all stumble.

Jesus taught us to consider. Paul taught us to consider:

- In John 7, Jesus challenges us to think deeply, not according to appearance. Look at yourself.
- Jesus taught us to consider the flowers of the field and birds of the air when anxious about earthly needs.
- Jesus taught us to consider how outside rulers lord their position over others.
- Paul considered himself fortunate to be before King Agrippa.
- Paul said we must consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God.
- Paul said current suffering isn't worth the glory to be revealed.
- Paul taught us to consider what God has accomplished through people who aren't much to write home about.
- The Hebrew writer asked his audience to consider Jesus in all His beauty and suffering.

So . . .

Do we not think about these things because they don't hold value?

Do we not think about these things because we don't honestly believe them.

I pray that we're sheep with depth in our lives. I hope this will be a good reminder for those who think deeply and a caring check for those of us who may be missing the point. May God bless us all with mercy and grace. It's a process, is it not?